

Some Upcoming Events

September 2021

[Suicide Prevention Awareness Month](#)

Labor Day

September 6

[National HBCU Week Conference](#)

September 7-10

[SAIGE National Training Program](#)

September 14-16

National Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15-October 15

POW/MIA Recognition Day

September 16

Citizenship Day

September 17

Constitution Day/Week

September 17/17-23

[AAFEA Leadership Development Workshop](#)

September 20-22, 2021

[GLMA Conference on LGBTQ Health](#)

September 21-25

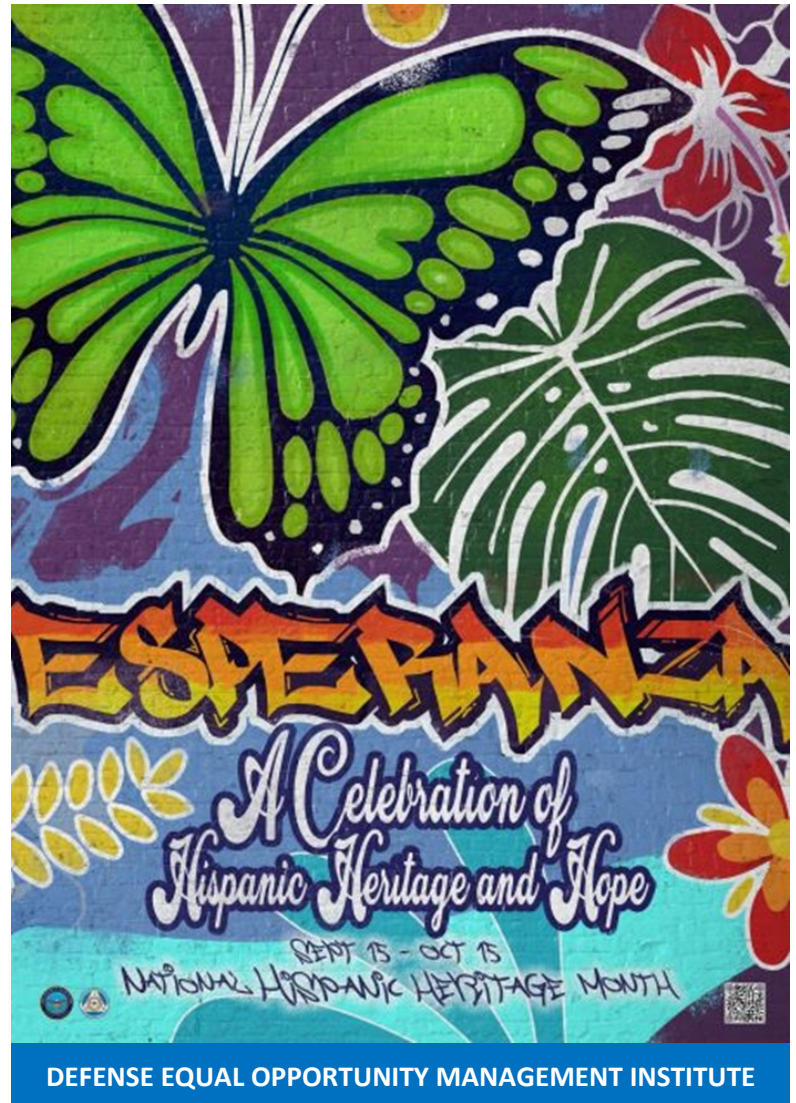
Gold Star Mother's Day

September 26

ORMDI

Steps Toward Conflict Resolution

You can contact the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) toll-free at 1-888-566-3982 (TTY/TDD at 1-888-626-9008) and speak with a specialist regarding [EEO Complaint Processing](#), [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#), and [Harassment Prevention](#). You must initiate contact with an EEO counselor within 45 days of the date of the alleged act of discrimination by calling 1-888-566-3982 or visiting your local ORMDI Field Office.



Commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month

VA joins the Nation in commemorating Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) this September 15 to October 15. This year's national theme is "Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope." VA managers and supervisors are encouraged to support events and activities that recognize Hispanics and their many contributions to American society.

During National Hispanic Heritage Month, VA commemorates Hispanic cultures and histories, and significant contributions Hispanics have made to American society and to our Nation.

[Continued on page 3.](#)

Message from the DAS

Harvey Johnson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion



DAS Johnson, ORMDI

The Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) worked with Information Technology Workforce Development staff to produce a video announcing the winners of the Ninth Annual Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Excellence and Alternative Dispute Resolution Excellence (ADR) Awards and highlighting their accomplishments. I am pleased to share that this [awards video is now available online](#). Please join me in congratulating the awards winners for their outstanding achievements in support of D&I and ADR.

Finally, visit the [ORMDI website](#) for information on how to participate in the Veterans Health Administration's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion listening sessions for Veterans. These sessions are being conducted in support of Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities and we thank those Veterans who share their experiences.

Training

Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program

ORMDI hosts "Overview of the Harassment Prevention Program (HPP)" the first Wednesday of each month from 10 to 11 a.m. and 2 to 3 p.m. (ET). Register on the Talent Management System (TMS VA 4563938).

Workplace Civility and Root Causes of Workplace Disputes

Workplace Civility and Root Causes of Workplace Disputes is designed to enrich and increase employees' awareness, skills, knowledge, and sensitivities to enhance engagement, inclusion and inclusive diversity, and proactively prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Workplace Civility training for nonsupervisory employees (TMS VA 4504880) will be held September 7 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Conflict Management for Employees

The Conflict Management virtual course provides information on the nature of conflicts and how to manage it. It provides a basic understanding of conflict, the underlying causes of conflict, and how ADR can be used to resolve disputes. The course emphasizes mediation as one of the most commonly used ADR processes to address workplace disputes. Conflict Management training for employees (TMS VA 4562696) will be held September 21 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. and September 23 from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

The Audacity to Fail Podcast

The Audacity to Fail Podcast: misStepping Into Success focuses on discovering leadership wisdom through experiences with failures and missteps. The podcasts dive into conversations and stories from leaders as they share that failure activates a growth mindset, is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement! For the August episode, Dr. Shari Dade dialogues with Dr. Ryan Vega, the Chief Officer in the Healthcare Innovation and Learning office. Dr. Vega provides direct guidance to the VHA Innovation Ecosystem, which includes the Innovators Network and Diffusion of Excellence, the VHA Simulation Learning Evaluation and Research Network, and the new Center for Care and Payment Innovation. Dr. Vega discusses the missteps leaders can make while trying new ideas in the workplace. The series is also available on the [Talent Management System](#).

External Affinity Conferences

Hybrid National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week and Conference

The Annual National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week Conference is planned under the leadership of the White House Initiative on HBCUs and with input from the President's Board of Advisors on HBCUs and its conference sponsors. It provides a forum to exchange information and share innovations among and between institutions. Stakeholders, which include federal agencies, private sector companies, and philanthropic organizations, provide an overview of successful engagements that, if replicated, could improve instruction, degree completion, and the understanding of federal policies that shape and support higher education. This year's event will be held September 7-10, 2021, and is free to attendees. The 2021 theme is "Exploring Equity." [Register online for the HBCU Week Conference](#) before September 7. For more information, contact Ms. Tynnetta Lee, VA's HBCU representative.



Policy Reminder

Religious Exercise and Expression

VA is committed to ensuring Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), promoting workforce diversity, workplace inclusion, and constructively resolving conflict to sustain a high-performing organization in service to our Nation's Veterans. VA will vigorously enforce all applicable Federal EEO laws, regulations, executive orders, and management directives to ensure equal opportunity in the workplace for all VA employees and applicants. As a reminder, many of these documents are linked from [ORMDI's Policy web page](#).

This page also houses the [Department's policy guidance on Religious Exercise and Expression in VA Facilities and Property Under the Charge and Control of VA](#). VA is committed to maintaining a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment and to protecting First Amendment freedoms. As our Nation becomes increasingly diverse, so do the religious affiliations and belief systems of its citizens. VA must be mindful and respectful of the diverse belief systems and the First Amendment rights of all its employees, Veterans, stakeholders, and others in the conduct of VA business.

At all times, the government must ensure that it does not act in a manner that would lead a reasonable observer to conclude that it is sponsoring, endorsing or inhibiting religion generally or favoring or disfavoring a particular religion. The government must also ensure that it does not require or pressure its employees or others to participate in religious activities or to refrain from participation in such activities. Please read the Religious Exercise and Expression in VA Facilities and Property Under the Charge and Control of VA FAQs for more information. We all have a responsibility to be respectful and to ensure that our workplaces are harassment-free zones.

Commemorate

[Continued from Page 1](#)

In 1968, Congress passed Public Law 40-498 to honor the achievements of Hispanics in America with histories and cultures from ancestors who came from Spain, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Congress, by Public Law 100-402, as amended, authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month." These dates are significant as they commemorate the independence of various Latin American countries among them are Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico declared independence on September 16, and Chile on September 18.

As of June 30, 2021, Hispanics represented 7.05% of VA's permanent workforce. Of its permanent workforce, VA employs 120,728 Veterans, of which 7.78% are Hispanic. VA is experiencing less than expected participation for Hispanic men and women when compared to the Relevant Civilian Labor Force. In addition, Hispanic men have less than expected participation rates at GS-1, 2, 5, 6, 8, GS-11 through 14, and Senior Executive Service (SES) levels, and women have less than expected participation rates at GS-1 through 3, GS-10, GS-12 through 15, and SES levels when compared to the pay grade distribution of the total permanent VA workforce.

By way of a joint memorandum issued by the heads of the Office of Personnel Management and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regarding Hispanics in the Federal Workforce, Federal agencies with at least 1,000 full-time equivalent employees should conduct a more focused barrier analysis on Hispanic employment. In January 2021, VA established a Barrier Analysis Workgroup comprised of a cross-section of department officials representing a myriad of disciplines to identify and eliminate barriers to equal employment opportunity for Hispanics around outreach and recruitment. At the conclusion of the analysis, the Workgroup will compose a report of its findings and recommendations.

To promote awareness and engage employees about cultural diversity, the VA Central Office HHM Planning Committee in conjunction with the Center for Minority Veterans will host a virtual HHM observance program on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, from noon until 1:00 p.m. (EST).

For more information, visit [VA's Hispanic Employment Program webpage](#).

More External Affinity Conferences

Society of American Indian Government Employees National Training Program

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) will hold its 17th National Training Program September 14-16, 2021. This year's theme is "Grounded in Tradition, Resilient in Summit." SAIGE is a national non-profit organization founded in 2001 whose mission is to promote the recruitment, retention, development and advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native government employees. The program will offer topics on professional development, federal Indian law, environmental and natural resources, cultural appreciation and a variety of Indian Country issues. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees who plan to participate must also register on the [SAIGE website](#). For more information, contact Ms. Sehar Minhas, VA's Departmental American Indian and Alaska Native Program Manager, ORMDI.



African American Federal Executive Association Annual Leadership Development Workshop

The African American Federal Executive Association (AAFEA) 17th Annual Leadership Development Workshop will be held virtually September 20-22, 2021. The Workshop focuses on the programs, policies, practices, and processes that promote career enhancing opportunities and the core subjects critical for becoming a member of the SES. This three-day event is designed for federal and military professionals with experience at the GS-13 and above level. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for registration must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees who plan to participate must also register on the [AAFEA website](#). For more information, contact Tynnetta Lee, VA's Departmental African American Program Manager.



Gay and Lesbian Medical Association Annual Conference

The 39th Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA) Annual Conference on LGBTQ Health will be held virtually September 21-25, 2021. This scientific conference on LGBTQ health features innovative healthcare breakthroughs and interventions, as well as the latest research from LGBTQ health experts from across the country. The conference is open to healthcare providers of all disciplines, researchers, academics, health administrators, policy experts, advocates, and all LGBTQ health supporters. The 2021 conference theme is "Closing the Gaps" and focuses on strategies to reduce and eliminate LGBTQ health inequities through expanding access to care, and developing leadership of LGBTQ community members and professionals who belong to multiple minority groups. This year, GLMA aims to highlight speakers who are working to identify, assess, address, and close these gaps. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for both registration and/or travel must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the [GLMA Conference website](#). For more information, contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI.



Out & Equal Workplace Summit

The 2021 Out & Equal Workplace Summit will be held virtually October 6-8, 2021. This annual summit brings together executives; employee resource group leaders and members; and human resources and diversity, equity, and inclusion professionals and experts – all working for LGBTQ equality. VA employees who plan to attend are responsible for obtaining supervisory approvals. Please note that centralized funding is not available for attendance. Funding for both registration and/or travel must come from the employee's benefitting program office. Following supervisory and budget approval, attendees must also register on the [Out & Equal website](#). For more information, contact Mr. Sterling Akins, VA's Departmental LGBTQ+ Program Manager, ORMDI.



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